

Dr. Adams' Office
Lee County
Lee Center, Illinois

HABS Ill. No. 167

HABS
ILL,
52-Leec,
2-

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. Ill.1.

Historic American Buildings Survey
Earl H. Reed, District Officer
435 North Michigan Ave., Chicago

DOCTOR ADAMS' OFFICE
Lee Center, Lee County, Illinois

Owner - Howard Wellman, Postmaster

Date of Erection - 1848

Builder - Dr. Richard F. Adams

Present Condition - Fair

Number of Stories - One

Materials of Construction - Native random rubble stone and wood.

Additional Data - This little stone building of classic lines was built in 1848 by Dr. Richard F. Adams and was used as an office by Dr. Adams and Dr. Ephriam Ingals, his partner. No record is available as to the name of the architect or contractor, so credit cannot be definitely given to anyone for its design. The splayed door jamb panels on the outside and the splayed window jambs on the inside, together with the other elements such as the cornice and the fan light in the front elevation, show that feeling and understanding were possessed by the designer. In about 1870 a frame addition was built and together with the original stone building now forms the home and office of the Postmaster of the town, but it is still called by the old residents of Lee Center "Dr. Adams' Office".

Dr. Richard F. Adams was born in 1812 and after graduating from a medical college in the east in 1837, came west and made his home in the log cabin of a former Vermont friend, Mr. C. F. Ingals who lived in Inlet, a small settlement in Lee County, largely composed of cultured people from the east. A licensed physician was gladly welcomed in this community where sickness and death had made inroads and he was an able surgeon as well as untiring in his day and night visits to his patients, scattered through the county; however, the community was poor and he was forced to resort to farming for an income.

During the following years he moved his office to Dixon and then to Ottawa, but still found he could not make his practice pay him a living.

In 1847 the "Academy" was built in the new town called Lee Center and Dr. Adams was elected one of the trustees. About this time he and Dr. Ephriam Ingals, who joined him in the practice of medicine, built their little stone office in Lee Center.

In 1854 Dr. Adams moved to Amboy and in 1859 was elected to the State Senate. Bringing with him the strong feeling of New England against slavery, he took a conspicuous part in the anti-Douglas demonstrations. He was a strong supporter of Lincoln and was the first man in the State Senate to vote for Lincoln for United States Senator. He was devoting much of his time to politics at the expense of his medical practice, but was achieving much popularity for his sound principles. He is described as a "Very prominent man, of much force of character, bluff and ready, a fine stump speaker", who took an active part in forming the Republican Party in Illinois in 1856.

He remained prominent in State politics until the close of the Civil War when he resumed his practice of medicine, but the community gradually became depopulated and in 1874 he moved to Denver, Colorado to enter the mining business. He died in that city in 1895.

Sources - Interested residents of Lee Center, including Howard Wellman, present owner, and Mrs. William S. Frost. Also "Forgotten Statesmen of Illinois, Richard F. Adams", a pamphlet by Frank E. Stevens. Reprinted from the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Vol. 22 No. 4, January 1930.

By Margaret A. Jones

Approved E. A. [Signature]

7/28/37